

Speech without Doors:

Concerning the

Theology
Burd
P R O C E S S

AGAINST

Professor SIMSON, *K*

As it now lies before the VENERABLE
ASSEMBLY of the CHURCH of
SCOTLAND,

In Name of some ONLOOKERS who are
Trembling for the Ark of GOD.

Directed in a LETTER *to a Member of the*
Assembly.

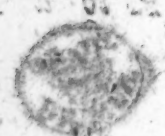


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BOOK



A SPEECH without Doors, &c.

S I R,



HO' we, who are without Doors, have not Access to speak our Minds in your *Assembly*; yet, many of us are not Strangers to the great and weighty Affair concerning Professor *Simson*, which lies before you. Why do I say the Affair of Professor *Simson*? Nay, the highest Concerns of our dear Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ, whose Glory, even his Supreme Deity, are, thro' that Man, come to be a Subject of Debate in this Church. And shall we be unconcerned Spectators? God forbid. We hope, the Lord will appear for his own Cause, and stir up Instruments to speak in it, with Wisdom and Zeal. If

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even the Dumb Ass, got a Commission to rebuke the Madnes of the Prophet, shall we think that the Cause of Christ will suffer by the Silence of any true Lovers of him? Nay, we hope, the Mouths even of Stammerers will be opened, and made to speak plain on such an Occasion. We know there are not a few in your House of great Learning and shining Eloquence; but shall we think, that even these, who are not in Use to speak in such great and venerable Meetings, shall be silent in such a Cause, and leave the Management of it in the Hands of a few. Nay, we hope to hear of some worthy Members, who shall, on this Occasion, have their Mouths opened, *earnestly to contend for the Faith once delivered to the Saints.*

We do not, by all this, mean, that Men should either speak, in a tumultuary Manner, or in long wearisome Harangues, whereof we can see no real good Use, nor any other End, at Bottom, but to protract Time, and keep this important Affair from coming to a final Issue at this Assembly. We have observed such Speeches by severals the last Assembly, which we have too good Reason to fear were delivered with that View, if we may be allowed to make a Conjecture from the Matter of them, and the declared Sentiments of the Speakers. Some of us remember, that when this was offered to be

be checked, a certain eminent Speaker among the Elders was so fired with ungoverned Passion, that he forgot his Station in that House, so far as to take upon him in a Magisterial Way to rebuke the Assembly, as if they had fallen into an indecent Behaviour, because Two or three Members, outwearied by tedious Harangues, offered to interrupt him, when he had spoken a full Hour at that Time, and frequently before. I must take notice of this, tho' but a Circumstance, because very much depends on it; and, because, by Yesternight's Management, the same Humour, by some of the same Members, seem'd to appear. Dear, Sir, If this shall be the Case, we humbly conceive it will be most necessary, for all who are truly concerned for this weighty Cause, to take Care to give an early Check to it, by a joint Signification of their Displeasure: Nor would such a Behaviour deserve the Character of *Indecency*, tho' many Voices at once should interpose in such a Case. 'Tis nothing out of the Way, when the joint Cry is, in one Word, to keep Men from spending Time that is so precious, for no other visible End, but to spend it.

Nor does it appear, That there is so much need of tedious Harangues, as this Matter comes before this *Assembly*; when it shall be considered, that the *last Assembly*, have proceeded so far as to determine some

important Articles of the Libel, both *relevant* and *proven*. And the *Committee* have, with so much Care, Faithfulness and Diligence, prepared what that Assembly could not overtake. And this being laid before you in a printed Book, which every one may read and consider at Leisure, we are persuaded this might save much Time in the House, if some, who can both contrive new Subjects of Disputes, even in the clearest Case, and insist on them, would open their Eyes to plain Truth and Evidence, and not keep off with long Weapons, and Dispute every little Circumstance.

We foresee by Yesternight's Debate that the *Assembly* will be in Hazard of losing a Diet in a Preliminary Matter about the Method of Procedure. Now, we who are Bystanders, cannot see how this should take up the Assembly's Time, except there were something so very evidently prejudicial to Truth, in the Method laid down by the last Assembly, and followed out by the Committee; but, if some will wrangle about this, we could heartily wish that others would yield to the Consideration of any material Article, first or last, providing nothing be admitted that shall either directly or indirectly overturn, or even weaken what the last *Assembly* did.

We know it is pretended, That this Assembly may and ought to recognise the last
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Assembly's Procedure. No Body doubts, but *Assemblies* are fallible, and that they have erred too. But this *General*, can never be an Argument to induce this *Assembly*, *brevi manu*, to admit of recognoising what Interlocutors have passed in the *former* in this Cause, and left by them unfinished, unless the Injury to Truth and Equity were so very palpable, that most Presbyteries had instructed their Members to declare that this was their Sentiments; but as this is not the Case, 'tis expected, that this *Assembly* will proceed where the last *Assembly* left off, until they finish this Process.

The Matter seems to ly plain before you. The last *Assembly* have found the following Articles *relevant* and *proven*, viz. (1.) *Professor Simson his denying the Necessary-existence of our Lord Jesus Christ in teaching his Students.* And this, notwithstanding of the exculpatory Evidences offered. *vid. State of the Process, Page 184.* (2.) *Professor Simson's teaching his Scholars, that the Necessary-existence of our Lord Jesus Christ, was a Thing we know not.* *vid. State of the Process, Page 185.* (3.) *That the Term Necessary-existence of our Lord Jesus Christ is not to be used in speaking of the Trinity is relevant.* *vid. State of the Process, Page 186. and Page 188.* where the Report of the *Committee* is approved by the *Assembly*.

Now, these Points are of such great Weight, that, had no more been libelled the last Assembly could not but have proceeded unto a final Sentence and high Censure of Mr. *Simson*, which no thinking Person can imagine, could or would have been a meer temporary Suspension, which was only then past, not as a condign Censure for what was found *relevant* and *proven*, but because the whole Process was not finished; and tho' the Assembly might really have stopt here, there being enough found *relevant* and *proven* to warrant the highest Censures of the Church; yet they have thought fit to give Evidence of their Lenity and Patience, and their Desire that a Matter of such Weight should be considered and determined with the greatest Deliberation; and therefore ordered a Committee to prepare for this Assembly what they could not overtake. But, how dreadful will it be, and how grievous to the Hearts of all the Godly, if it shall be found, that this Delay hath procured him more Defenders, even in the Matters already found *relevant* and *proven*, as well as in those which remain under Consideration. We hope, tho' this is suggested, it shall be found otherwise; or, that the Lord will stir up Instruments to stand firm to his own Truths, who shall overrule such as may offer to insinuate any Thing against the Determination of the last Assembly.

Besides

Besides these Things found both *relevant* and *proven*, the last *Assembly* found another Article *relevant*, tho' they had not Time to proceed to the Consideration of the *Proof*, viz. *The Professor's teaching as his own Opinion, that the three Persons of the Trinity are not to be said to be numerically One in Substance and Essence, Vid. State of Process, P. 186.* And it is hoped the Dispute concerning the *Relevancy* of this Article will no more come on the Field. Thus far the last *Assembly* proceeded.

Now the Committee have with great Application and Faithfulness proceeded to prepare what remains for this *Assembly*, *usque ad sententiam*, conform to their Instructions.

Hereof you have a full Account printed. But to refresh your Memory, take the following brief Memorandum.

The Committee have clearly stated the Proof of these Propositions, *That the Terms Necessary-existence and Independency were impertinent, and not to be used in talking of the Trinity; and, that the Terms Necessary-existence and Independency were philosophical Niceties we know nothing about.* State of Process P. 196. 197. and left the Import of the Proof to the *Assembly*. And it is hoped, that when it is considered, that the following Particulars are deponed on this Head, *That the Professor asserted the Terms Necessary-existent and Independent were impertinent,*

tinent, and not to be used in talking of the Trinity, by Mr. William Brown's Oath, that he affirmed, *the said Terms were not used in Scripture, and were impertinent*; by Mr. M'Lae's Oath, and that the Words *Dependent* and *Independent* were unfit to be used; by Mr. Thomas Hamilton's Oath, and, that the Professor, when speaking of the *Independency* and *Necessary-existence* of our Lord Christ, said, *That these Terms were not proper or fit to be used in speaking of the Trinity*; and that Mr. William Boyd Depones, That to this Objection moved to the Professor, viz. *Then it is possible the Son might not have been, and the Father might have been without him*, the Professor answered, *That is a philosophical Nicety we know nothing about*; and, that Mr. Thomas Hamilton Depones, That upon a Student's urging, *that then the Son might not have been*, the Professor answered, *How do you or we know that*; and, that the Professor added, *That we are not so nicely to philosophize, when speaking of the Persons of the Trinity, or that these were philosophical Niceties*. Now, tho' the Committee have been so modest as not to assert these Propositions proven, because the Witnesses have not expressed precisely the *ipsissima verba* of the Libel; yet their Depositions do so clearly import *the same Thing*, that they have left it to the Assembly to confide it, and it is hoped the Assembly

sembly will find these Propositions proven.

The Committee considered the Grounds of *Alleviation* alledged by the *Professor*, and when judging of the *Relevancy* thereof, many Members having argued, that the *Professor* had never yet explained in what Sense he understood *Necessary existence* to be the *personal Property* of the *Father*, the *Professor* was desired to declare if he owned the *Son* to be as *necessarily begotten* of the *Father*, as the *Father* was of *None*, he shifted to answer it; upon which the Committee declared, that his Grounds of Exculpation did not alleviate. And 'tis not doubted, but the *Assembly* will approve of their Opinion. *Vid.* State of Proceſs, P. 206. 207.

As to the 4th Article, *Professor Simſon's* teaching, as his own Opinion, *that the Three Persons of the Trinity are not to be ſaid to be numerically One in Subſtance or Eſſence*, which the *Assembly* have found relevant, but left the Conſideration of the Proof of it to the Committee; the ſaid Committee have found it clearly proven. State of Proceſs 211.

It is further found, that when the *Professor* was again urged to declare himſelf about the *Son's* being *necessarily begotten*, he again ſhifted to make Answer. *State of Proceſs*, P. 217.

And, whereas he pleaded, That if he uttered any Expreſſion denying the *Necessary-existence*

existence of the Son, it should be accounted only a *Trip in Speech*; it was reasoned in the Committee, that the Grossness of the Article it self would hardly allow any to think it was a mere Trip in Speech; and that the Witnesses show he taught this, both in explaining the *Confession of Faith* and the *Latin System*; and that he had refused to satisfy the *Presbytery of Glasgow*, when *queried* on this Head; That he had not cleared himself in his Answers to the Libel; and in all the Procedure of the Judicatories of this Church with him about this Article, he hath never come up fairly to own the *Necessary-existence* of our Lord Jesus Christ. *vid. State of Process, P. 223, &c.* As also, 'tis to be observed, that tho' the Professor pretends to have taught the *Confession*, this can be no Alleviation with Respect to this Article, seeing he declares that *Christ's Necessary-existence* is no Article of our *Confession*, and that diverse of the essential Perfections of the Divine Nature mentioned in our *Confession* seemed by the Professor to be accounted the *personal Properties of the Father*. And further, his teaching the *Confession* at one Time would never prove that he had not taught at another Time what was inconsistent therewith. And is it not strange, that the Professor should still conceal his Mind as to the *Necessary-existence* of Christ, by pretending that the

Term

Term was ambiguous. See *State of Process*, P. 224, where this Matter is set in clear Light by the Committee.

The Committee have likewise found several Things evident from his own Papers, and give it as their Opinion that they are both relevant and proven. As,
1st That the Professor owned and acknowledged, that in Speaking of the Lord Christ he did not use the Terms *Necessary-existence* nor *Independence*, and gave this pretended Reason for it, that they are not mentioned concerning Christ in the Holy Scripture. *State Page 225 and 226.*

2^d, That the Professor taught or vented, *That Self-existence Necessary existence, Independence, Supreme Deity, and the Title of the only true God, are taken by some Authors in a Sense that includes the personal Property of the Father, and so not belonging to the Son. P. 228.* And the Committee have found that the Professor is so far from condemning these Authors, that he plainly builds on that Supposition: And this appears plain from what he says in his Answers, *Page 40* of this State, concerning the Term Self-existence, *viz. That he would take it as a Piece of useful Caution or Instruction to him and the Students, if the Presbytery would declare the true Meaning of that English Term of Art, when it is to be affirmed of the Son and Holy Ghost.* Whereby it is evident the Professor shows, that he knew no true Meaning of these Terms when apply'd to the Person of the Son and Holy Ghost. And is not this further evident, from his asserting that *Necessary-existence & Independence* are ambiguous Terms of Art, (*Page 50* of this State) and that they are not affirmed of the Person of the Son of God. Yet the Professor allows that these
Terms

Terms may be fitly taken for the *Father's personal Property*; otherwise what Shew could there be in the Reason he assigns, of his forbearing to use them with Respect to *the Son*? Can it be thought a sufficient Reason to forbear to apply them to the *Son*, because some Authors abuse them to include the *personal Property of the Father*. And Page 160. of the State of the Process. In his Answers to the Remarks, The Professor saith that *Necessary-existence*, being taken by some Authors for *Being of None*, or receiving nothing from any other *Being or Person*, in this Sense it can only agree to the Father, where the Professor teacheth a Sense of *Necessary-existence*, not agreeing to the *Son*, and mentions no Orthodox Author taking it in that Sense, and insinuates a *lower* Sense, wherein it agreeth to the *Son*, and a *Higher* wherein it agreeth to the *Father*. This Matter the Committee have set in a clear Light.

As also they find, That when speaking of the Term *Supreme Deity*, as apply'd to the *Son*, he said it was to be taken *cum grano salis*; he owns he might have used that Expression, which shows that these Terms when applyed to the *Son* (according to him) are not to be taken in the greatest Latitude.

These Things make it evident that he is unsound in these great Articles.

The Committee have likewise given it as their Opinion, that Mr. *Simson* is highly censurable for his obstinate Refusing to answer the *Queries* proposed to him by the Presbytery.

And they have also considered what was remitted to them to enquire unto his Observing the Act of Assembly 1717. But what we have taken Notice of as to the other Things, being all that could be of

vertaken at the Time, and being indeed the principal Thing, we shall only notice now, That we conceive it will appear evident, both by the *Professor's* own *Answers*, and by the Deposition of *Witnesses*, that he hath contraven'd that Act frequently, if not habitually, which may sufficiently warrant a just Jealousy, that it is not safe to allow him to teach or preach.

We take the more Notice of this, that we have heard it suggested, that some of his Friends are moving to have this Process to terminate in an Act, prohibiting the Professor to teach in the Terms which have been found proven: But, as this is no safe Method, seeing he may instil his dangerous Sentiments by other Words, and so shift from Time to Time under this Colour; Is it not evident from what hath been found relevant and proven, that he entertains wrong Sentiments about the Trinity and Supreme Deity of Christ; and shall this be tolerated by such a gentle Method as a meer Prohibition of the Use of Terms? O Let it be considered of what great Moment this Article is, how fundamental with Respect to the whole Scheme of revealed Religion.

The Eyes of the Churches of Christ far and near are upon *this Assembly*; Enemies are waiting for your halting, and the true Lovers of Christ are trembling for *his Ark*, and praying for Divine Conduct. Nay, the Eyes of God are upon you. May the Lord direct *the Assembly* and every Member of it, in this weighty Affair, that these valuable Truths may not receive a Wound which would with good Ground make us to say *Jehabod*. If *this Assembly* do not both condemn these Errors, and condignly censure the Venter of them, we expect

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expect both a Flood-gate of Error, Schism, Disorder
and Prophanity to follow as a native Consequence
But we hope better Things of you, and rest,

Yours, &c.

*Edinburgh, 7th
May, 1728.*

P. S. The Harmony of this Afternoon's *Sederunt*, in finding the Fourth Proposition, *State of the Process*, Page 183, proven, having disappointed my Fears of what Yesternight's Debate anent the Method of Procedure, presaged, I conceive better Hopes of the Issue of this Affair. Only I heartily wish, after such Evidence of the Professor's Unsoundness, no Person may think it safe to allow him to continue to teach or preach, tho' he should make an ample Recantation.

